



**Testimony in support of
SB 352 – An Act Concerning Prescriptions for and the Dispensing of Opioid Antagonists
7 March 2016**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the committee, my name is Shawn Lang, and I'm the Deputy Director with AIDS CT, CT's only statewide organization whose sole focus is HIV/AIDS. For the past three years, I've chaired the CT Opioid Overdose Prevention Workgroup, which has worked to increase awareness about, and expand access to Naloxone, an opioid antagonist which reverses opiate overdoses.

The Opioid Overdose Prevention Workgroup is statewide and has multi-disciplinary, cross department participation. The workgroup is open and current participating partners include the Connecticut Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health, Correction, Social Services, and Children and Families; the Connecticut Prevention Network; APT Foundation; AIDS Connecticut; Walgreens; researchers from Yale and Brown Universities; Recovery Network of Programs; and Medical Doctors.

I'm here to testify in support of **SB 352 "An Act Concerning Prescriptions for and the Dispensing of Opioid Antagonists"**.

From 2009 –2014, there were **over 2,000 accidental and unintentional opioid involved deaths that occurred in 150 of our 169 cities and towns**. While the majority of prescription opioid users do not become heroin users, research found that approximately 3 out of 4 new heroin users report as having abused prescription opioids prior to using heroin. One of the programs that we have at AIDS CT is a syringe exchange program. Since last February, we've been training our clients on how to recognize an overdose, and how to administer Naloxone. To date, our clients have reversed over 60 overdoses in the greater Hartford community.

The standing order model is one which we've supported over the past few years. My home state of Massachusetts has employed the standing order model since 2011. This model would remove the barriers currently in place for concerned families and loved ones. While pharmacists across the state are taking the online certification program, it's been difficult to access the list so that we can direct people to those pharmacists. CVS has this model in 20 states – not in Connecticut at this time – and, by the end of the year, Walgreens will have this model in place in 39 states – including Connecticut. Enacting this legislation will bring us more in line with what is occurring in other parts of the country.

Please join us in supporting strengthening the state's response and ability to address the opiate addiction epidemic.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

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